

The Planters' Chronicle.

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THE U. P. A. S. I.

(INCORPORATED.)

Contents.

Mr. Anstead, Scientific Officer, has been away in Coorg during the past week, but hopes to return to Head Quarters on the 6th instant, but left for publication an article on the Red Spider which does so much damage to Tea. The remedy should be closely read.

A short account of the process for improving the lower grades of Rubber is published for the information of Rubber Planters.

Two District Planters' Associations meetings are published—those of the Wynad and Nilgiri Planters' Associations. We regret that pressure of space prevents us publishing the whole of the proceedings of the latter Association, but we may mention that a Resolution was passed identical with that passed by the Wynad Planters' Association, on the proposed Labour Commission.

Correspondence takes up a large portion of this issue, and as it deals largely with the Labour Problem and the Labour Commission, we think that at this juncture the Labour Question is so prominently before the Planting Community, it is advisable to publish as much as possible that has any bearing on this important subject. On both these subjects, we are glad to publish two letters from Mr. Burnard, which, though they may not find ready acceptance, are welcome as showing that men are *thinking* and trying to find a solution of this subject, and may have the effect of stirring others up to write for the benefit of all of us.

From C. J. H.'s letter it appears that men are beginning to realise that safety is to be found in the establishment of a Labour Commission.

Above the signature of H. T. K. we publish a criticism on the Labour Commission's report, but we cannot help thinking that these criticisms would carry more weight if correspondents would sign their names to them rather than hide their identity under a nom-de-plume or initials.

The Secretary wishes it to be known that he is publishing in a pamphlet form the whole discussion on the Labour Question that took place at the Annual Meeting in August and that applications should at once be sent in for them.

Scientific Officer's Papers.

CXXIII.—RED SPIDER (*Tetranychus bimaculatus*),

Red Spider is a minute reddish mite which attacks a large number of plants including Tea. Seasons of excessive drought are favourable to the development of the mite and at such times the pest increases rapidly. The leaves of plants infested with Red Spider often turn deep red or rusty on their upper surface and hence the pest is sometimes popularly called a 'rust,' but if such leaves are examined on their under surface they will reveal the presence of the Mites and the inconspicuous webs behind which they are feeding and laying their eggs.

The typical female is 0.5 mm long by 0.26 mm wide, broad oval, widest in front and the legs are shorter than the body. Its colour is usually brick red. The typical male is 0.27 mm long by 0.15 mm wide. The eggs are minute, and perfectly round. The larvae hatching from the eggs are almost round, have six legs and are nearly colourless. They grow rapidly and moult twice, at the first moult an extra pair of legs being added. The old last skins are usually seen in abundance as white specks on the under side of attacked leaves.

The influence of weather on breeding activity is very marked. Hot, dry conditions favour and hasten development and, cold wet weather retard it.

The Red Spider is known to attack a large number of plants. An American Bulletin lists 104 known food plants and these include many common garden plants like Violets, Sweet Peas, and Salvia, as well as plants of economic importance like Eggplants and Tomatoes and a number of common weeds.

Recently the leaves of a young crop on an estate near Bangalore were found to be badly damaged by a Mite very similar in appearance to Red Spider. Specimens were sent to the Government Entomologist who identified them as belonging to the "Red Spider" group of Mites, but he was unable to say whether they were specifically identical with *Tetranychus bimaculatus* or not as no one has ever done any work on Indian Mites. He thought they were more probably a species commonly found on Cholan (Juar, Jola, *Andropogon sorghum*) which turns the leaves red.

Red Spider is carried from plant to plant by wind and by the agency of domestic animals, insects, and birds, but mainly by its own efforts. They spread from plant to plant along interlacing branches and along the ground.

They have a number of insect enemies which no doubt help to keep this pest in control. In the case mentioned above a number of small beetles were present running about the infected leaves and under the webs of the Mites. These were identified by the Government Entomologist as a species of *Scymnus*, a Lady-bird Beetle, and he remarks, that as far as his observations on Cholan go, these Lady-birds, both larvae and adults, only eat the eggs of the Mite but each gets through a large quantity, and does a lot of good.

With regard to the use of Sprays it is absolutely necessary to use a contact insecticide, and as the mite passes most of its existence on the under-side of the leaf it is necessary when spraying to hit the underside of every

leaf on the plant with the spray. This means careful spraying and it is further necessary to spray twice as no insecticide is known which will kill the eggs. The second spraying is to kill the Mites which have hatched from the eggs untouched by the first spraying.

The best spray to use appears to be either Flour Paste by itself or Flour Paste and Sulphur.

The following method of preparing the flour paste is given in American Bulletins on the subject. "Mix a cheap grade of wheat flour with cold watery making a thin batter, without lumps, or wash the flour through a wire screen with a stream of cold water. Dilute until there is one pound of flour in each gallon of the mixture. Cook until a paste is formed, stirring constantly to prevent caking or burning. Add sufficient water to make up for evaporation."

Eight gallons of this stock solution are diluted to 100 gallons of water and used as a spray, and this alone is said to be very effective against the Mite. It is usual however to add to this 100 gallons 15 to 20 lbs. of flowers of sulphur and use this mixture as a spray. The Government Entomologist points out that this sulphur paste spray must be put on early in the morning as the decomposition of the sulphur under the action of Sunlight is the active principle.

RUDOLPH D. ANSTEAD,

Planting Expert.

*Rubber: Process for improving the lower grades of—*The Diamond Rubber Co., Fr. Pat. 448,974, August 12, 1912.

Lower grades of rubber are improved in quality by treatment with the alkali metals or their alkaline derivatives. For example: (1) 100 parts of low-grade rubber, containing 6 per cent. of acetone-soluble impurities are mixed on the masticating rolls with sodium, 5 parts, the rolls being maintained at a temperature of 60° – 76° C. In a few minutes the mass begins to harden and is transformed into a very tough product resembling high-grade rubber, which does not stick to the rolls and can be manipulated with ease. When the sodium is sufficiently distributed throughout the mass it is put aside to "incubate" for 24 hours in a suitable receptacle at a temperature of about 60° C. The metal is then removed by appropriate treatment. (2) 100 parts of "tacky" Pontianac rubber, containing 20 per cent. of acetone-soluble products, are mixed on hot rolls with sodium hydroxide (fused and powdered) 8½ parts. The mass is rapidly transformed into a tough product of superior quality, which is easy to manipulate. The transformation is completed by "incubating" (as above) at about 60° C. for 48 hours, after which the alkali is removed by washing or other suitable means. (3) 100 parts of low-grade, tacky rubber are dissolved in 750 parts of xylene and heated with sodium, 5 parts, at 100° C. in an autoclave for 24 hours, the mass being well agitated in order to distribute the sodium. The product is a gelatinous mass from which the solvent and alkali can be removed by suitable means, and which yields under this treatment a tough elastic substance of superior quality. In the case of rubber containing high percentages of resins, it is desirable to remove the resins from the rubber before treatment. The products obtained by this process are much less soluble in the ordinary solvents than the parent substances. They vulcanise readily yielding products of increased value.—E. W. L.—*Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry.*

DISTRICT PLANTERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Wynaad Planters' Association.

Proceedings of a Meeting held, at the Meppadi Club on September 17th, 1913.

PRESENT.—Messrs. Bownass, Darkin, Davies, Macbain, Malcolm, Milton, Parker, Powell, Vernede, West, Whitton, Winterbotham, C. E. Abbott (Honorary Secretary). *By proxy*: Mr. J. C. Stewart. *Visitor*: Mr. Blackham. Mr. Malcolm in the Chair.

1851. *The proceedings of last meeting were confirmed.*

1852. *Election of New Members.*—Messrs. N. C. Whitton and H. C. Davies were elected members.

1853. *District Board.*—Dr. Milton has been appointed to succeed Mr. J. Carson Parker as the Representative of the Association on the Malabar District Board.

1854. *Postal Delays.*—Read letter from the Honorary Secretary to the Postmaster-General giving instances of delay; and reply stating that the matter is receiving attention. Mr. West gave further instances and also complained of the delay in the post between Cherambadi and Sultan's Battery. The Honorary Secretary to address the Superintendent of Post Offices, Calicut.

1855. *Telegraph Office at Sultan's Battery.*—Read correspondence ending with the letter of the Superintendent of Telegraphs, West Coast Division, dated July 30th, stating that the matter is before Government, since when nothing has been heard. The Honorary Secretary was asked to write again.

1856. *Post Office at Vellera Mulla.*—Read correspondence about the proposed removal of the office to Pootoo Mulla Estate. (Since the Meeting a letter has been received from the Superintendent of Post Offices suggesting putting the office on Chenal Mulla Estate).

1857. *U. P. A. S. I. Meeting.*—Mr. Bownass, the Wynaad Delegate, read the following Report:—

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.—You have no doubt read reports of the Conference in the *Madras Mail* and other papers, but they were, I am sorry to say, neither very good nor very accurate. You have had, however, your *Planters' Chronicle* and the Chairman's, Planting Member's and Scientific Officer's eloquent addresses are there reported in full. These and the settling of the order of business took up the first day.

"There was nothing of any very special interest to our Association beyond the question of labour and the non-service of warrants. With regard to the Labour Question, which was quite the most important question before the meeting, you have all had the printed report of the Labour Committee, and have no doubt read it. This question was felt by all to be vital, and was given a whole day to itself. One cannot help feeling that it would be a good thing if all planters could attend these conferences, as it is a difficult matter afterwards, to put down or represent anything like the interesting discussions that take place, and the divergence of views expressed by the delegates from the different districts. All the delegates however were unanim-

mous upon the point of Labour. It was considered that the U. P. A. S. I. had shelved this question in the past, but that now or never something must be settled. The proposal to start a Labour Commission of our own, on similar lines to those of other countries, was unanimously adopted. As it was thought useless to discuss the question further, until some working scheme was formulated, the meeting appointed a Sub-Committee to draw up a Scheme and present the same to them for approval, and did me the honour of appointing me as one of the Committee. The Committee's report was read at the Meeting on a subsequent day, and met with general approval. Gentlemen, I should strongly advise you to buy the Book of Proceedings, from which you will get a full report of the speeches made, and the interesting nature of the discussion which took place thereon.

"We tried to set forth the 'reasons' and the 'benefits' to be gained by the establishment of such a Commission as fully and lucidly as possible, in order that Directors and Agents might grasp our point of view, and recognise that this question is one of paramount importance to the planting community of Southern India. While upon this question I may mention that a resolution was passed requesting Government to suppress the Professional Recruiter, who was defined as follows:—

"The Professional Recruiter is an individual who collects coolies and sells them at any centre and afterwards ceases to have any further interest in their well-being, future, or whereabouts, as distinguished from the authorised Kangany or Maistry," and this is a step in the right direction.

"With regard to the question of the non-service of warrants, the question that you particularly asked me to bring up, a resolution was unanimously passed as follows:—"That this Association would call the attention of the Government of Madras to the fact, that in spite of previous representation made upon this subject the number of warrants taken out against absconding maistries and coolies, which are unexecuted, remains very large, and particularly in the Native States of Mysore and district of Coimbatore, and would ask them to urge upon the officials of these respective districts that greater efforts be made to effect the service of warrants generally, and further, that we bring to the notice of the Mysore Durbar the fact that the local courts having jurisdiction are treating non-bailable warrants as bailable warrants resulting in the escape of the accused," but I might say that other delegates suggested that we might have requested the assistance of the Resident and Dewan, and this I leave for discussion at this meeting.

"I would bring to your notice the questions of support of the London School of Tropical Medicine, and the Planters' Benevolent Fund. The former is, I think, worthy of our support as an Association, and I would ask you to consider the question of contributing towards it. The latter you all know is a most desirable institution which does not get its proper measure of support by planters generally. I refer you, however, to the remarks upon this fund made by the Chairman in his opening address.

"It was unanimously agreed that the appointment of the Scientific Officer should be continued for another period.

"Gentlemen, I shall be glad to answer any question whatever upon the proposed Labour Commission scheme provided it is in my power to do so.

"Finally, I think that we have to congratulate our worthy Secretary, Mr. Abbott, upon holding the Chairmanship during two consecutive years, and in all, I believe, three times, and for piloting so ably the U. P. A. S. I. ship through a time of much worry and trouble."

The Report was ordered to be printed.

The Chairman, Mr. Malcolm, expressed the thanks of the Association to Mr. Bownass for his work, which was heartily endorsed by the Meeting.

1858. *Proposed Labour Commission.*—Mr. Malcolm spoke as follows:—

"We have all heard Mr. Bownass' Report with interest, and I think I am expressing your views in saying that we should accord him a very hearty vote of thanks for all he has done on our behalf at Bangalore. I think, too, that you all agree that the meeting identifies itself with what he has said about Mr. Abbott.

"The most important matter referred to in the report is that of Labour. It is not only a very important matter affecting us as a District, but, we understand, is equally important to the other planting districts of S. India. It is one that requires our very serious consideration.

"With the keen competition we are now experiencing with Ceylon and the F. M. S., it would seem that the only way of protecting our industry is to have a similar organization to theirs, to protect the interests of the estates we are responsible for, and to combat the competition we are meeting with from them.

"I hope you all agree that we approve of the idea of having a Labour Commission. The only matter that seems to me to call for very careful consideration, is the question of cost. I do not say this with the object of raising an objection, but in the hope that it will lead to discussion and very careful consideration of the point. I understand that in Ceylon the cost of their Labour Commission is somewhere about 33 cents (say 5 annas) per acre, whereas we may be called on to pay as much as Rs. 2 per acre. However the position, owing to the competition mentioned, is becoming such that some drastic action on our part is necessary to meet the case.

"I would suggest that if you are unanimous on the matter we should pass a resolution expressing our view, and should refer the matter to our respective Boards of Directors, or Proprietors, as soon as possible.

"Before concluding I think we should confirm the appreciation that has already been expressed at the U. P. A. S. I. meeting, of the work done by the Labour Committee. Our thanks are due to them for their trouble and Labour in drawing up the concise and able report on the position."

The subject was fully discussed, various questions were replied to by Mr. Bownass, and further explanations were given.

The following resolution was put from the Chair and carried unanimously:—

"This Meeting is unanimous in considering that the institution of a Labour Commission for South India is an urgent necessity, and that the Members present agree to represent the position to their Proprietors, recommending them to allow the Estates they are in charge of to join the scheme if it is found that the promises of support justify the establishment of a Commission on the lines suggested in the report of the Committee appointed by the United Planters' Association of Southern India. Proposed from the Chair, and carried unanimously."

Regarding a suggestion made by the Hon'ble Mr. E. F. Barber, it was decided to ask Members to send the Honorary Secretary the percentage of coolies they employ locally, or recruited from each District.

It should be explained that this enquiry is made to enable the Executive Committee of the Labour Commission to decide where Assistant Commissioners ought to be stationed. There is no necessity to give Maistries names. All that is wanted is a statement "-----Estate employs-----". Local Coolies-----%. Canarese-----%. Coimbatore, etc."

1859. *Non-Service of warrants in Mysore.*—With reference to the discussion on this subject at the July Meeting of this Association, and at the U. P. A. S. I. Meeting, the Honorary Secretary was instructed to address the Hon'ble the Resident.

1860. *Extradition.*—The Honorary Secretary was instructed to address the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government and ask if it would be possible to grant Extradition of absconding Maistries and coolies from Cochin and Travancore under Act I of 1903.

1861. *Grant to Meppadi Club.*—The consideration of this was postponed.

1862. *School of Tropical Medicine.*—The question of a grant from the funds of the Association was postponed till next Meeting.

The Proceedings concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

B. MALCOLM,

Chairman.

C. E. ABBOTT,

Hony. Secretary.

Nilgiri Planters' Association.

At a meeting of the Nilgiri Planters' Association held at the Collector's office, on Saturday, with the Hon'ble Mr. E. F. Barber in the chair, the following members were present: Mr. J. S. Nicolls, (Honorary Secretary), Mr. J. Harding Pascoe, Mr. A. S. Dandison, Mr. W. A. Cherry, Mr. Sydenham Clarke, Mr. W. Deane, Mr. C. Gray, Mr. P. Beaver, Mr. R. N. C. Grove, Mr. S. Bayly, Mr. W. Rowson, Mr. F. M. Cockburn, Mr. G. W. Church, Mr. Fulcher, Mr. L. A. Gerard Rogers and Mr. A. A. Brown.

By Proxy.—Mr. A. G. Nicholson, Mr. DeCoursey, and Mr. B. Von Dulong.

The following visitors were also present:—

Mr. Leslie Rogers, Mr. Murphy, Mr. D. Elkington, Mr. M. Young, I.C.S., Mr. H. C. Golden, Mr. N. J. Stanes, Mr. E. Vernede and Mr. Bisset.

Proceedings of Last Meeting.—These were taken as read.

U. P. A. S. I. CIRCULARS.—The following circular from the U. P. A. S. I. was read by the Honorary Secretary:—

"Dear Sir,—The following letter has been addressed to me by the Planting Member, and I shall feel very much obliged if you will give the matter your earnest and immediate attention.

"CINCHONA.—Government wish to know how many lbs. of bark can be supplied annually by planters during the next 5 years. I shall be glad if you can get me the information through the Honorary Secretaries of the District Planters' Associations.

"**RATES OF PAY.**—The Hon'ble Sir Harold Stuart wishes to find out the ruling rates of pay for coolies in various districts and the cost of living. Ruling rates of pay does not mean the average rates. Where rates vary in one district, the variations should be given, and where payments are made on results, the minimum and maximum monthly earnings should be shown.

"For instance, women might be shown to earn from so much to so much in the worst plucking month and so much to so much in the best plucking month. The enquiry of Sir Harold's is not official and, all the more for that reason, I should like the information to be prompt and exact.

"I trust that you will let me have a reply as early as possible, giving full and accurate information on the lines laid down in the Planting Member's letter."

The Honorary Secretary requested members to let him have the information asked for as early as possible, in order that he may reply to the circular. In response to some questions from members, Mr. Harding Pascoe thought the submission of such information would serve a useful purpose as there seemed to be a feeling that the cooly man was very badly treated and such information would tend to show the real state of affairs.

Mr. Barber pointed out that the information was not officially required and that possibly it would be of assistance if the district was divided into three divisions for the purposes of calculating wages. The information as regards cinchona bark was also promised.

ROADS AND COMMUNICATIONS.—The next subject was with reference to the Nadgani and Gudalur-Vytiri Road, which had been in a most unsatisfactory condition. A letter was read from the District Board stating that ample funds had been allotted, and the Hon'ble Mr. Barber stated that he had noticed much improvement already on this road. The meeting recorded the papers with satisfaction.

PREVENTION OF COFFEE THEFT.—With reference to a letter from the District Superintendent of Police asking what date was best for starting the duty of police for the prevention of coffee thefts, members thought it should start about the middle of October. It was resolved that members should communicate direct with the Superintendent of Police.

"**U. P. A. S. I. DELEGATES' REPORT.**—Mr. Nicolls read the following Delegates' Report which was recorded with a very hearty vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Cockburn and seconded by Mr. Sydenham Clarke:—

"**GENTLEMEN.**—As your Delegates, we attended the annual meeting of the United Planters' Association of Southern India, held in the Mayo Hall, Bangalore, from the 25th to 29th August, 1913. You will have read in the daily papers the Secretary's annual report, the Chairman's address, the work of the Planting Member and the Scientific Officer's annual report. They were all full of interest, showing what energy and keenness those concerned have put into their labours for the furthering of your interests, opening up many lines of thought, both as regards scientific researches and matters of even more vital importance. Lines which to the casual reader of the newspaper, we may appear to have rushed along too quickly, heedless of any dangers in front of us. Buy and read the annual book of proceedings, then we feel certain you will not think the confidence put in your Delegates has been misplaced. We will now remark on the items as they come in the agenda:—

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE

The EDITOR,
Planters' Chronicle,

Batgalore.

The Labour Problem.

Dear Sir,—Observing that my letter has elicited some comment by "Wanderer" I venture to address you further in connexion with one point.

It is: The appointment of Travelling Assistant Secretaries. "Wanderer" objects on the score of expense and states men "well up in coffee, tea, &c., would be required on a big salary."

I cannot agree with him for the following reasons:—

(1) The duties of the Assistant Secretary would be to collect and distribute opinions and in matters of general interest attempt to reconcile them. Personal intercourse will accomplish more in a month than correspondence will in a year. Regarding the technical and scientific aspects the A. S. would not be required to give a definite opinion matters brought to his notice. We have a Planting Expert and assistants and hope to have a Mycologist to whom such matters would be referred by the A. S. on his periodical visits to Headquarters.

Further, though it is a minor point but not without value, as "Wanderer" says. "We gaily agree to carry out experiments—but the results are nil." Now none of us care to admit failure but the sense of regret is very much lessened when the admission is made through the post or not at all, but if a man after promising to perform an experiment was conscious that someone would personally come round and collect results in due course, I fancy a great many more experiments would be carried to a successful conclusion. Generally speaking it is beyond dispute that personal intercourse is the most satisfactory method of conducting business and in my experience I have observed that most Associations, Trades Unions, &c., have travelling officials and since they find the appointments justified it will require convincing arguments to prove the contrary in our case.

For these reasons I think that a couple of Travelling Assistant Secretaries on say Rs.400 a month plus Rs.100 travelling allowance would be a decided advantage to the community.

There is one line of argument I foresee and it is:

1. Can we afford it?
2. Will the results justify the expenditure.

Regarding 1. I see from the Labour Committee's Report that the subscribing acreage to the U. P. A. S. I. is 140,000 acres, but taking 100,000 as the acreage which with an annual cess of 2 annas per acre will yield Rs.12,500 per annum, quite enough to support 2 men.

A salary of Rs.400 should, I think, attract the right sort of man who would be just an ordinary planter with a working knowledge of planting and some tact.

The second possible objection is one that scarcely admits of argument. Those in favour of the idea have behind them the fact that it has proved a

success with other organisations while for those against it—well I don't propose to provide them with arguments even if I could think of any valid ones.

In conclusion I must apologise for inflicting this lengthy letter on you, but excuse myself on the score of complying with your request for communications from planters and subscribers to the *Chronicle*.

Yours faithfully,

N. O. S. BARNARD.

Munderi Estate,
Pondalur P. O., 24th September, 1913.

THE EDITOR,
Planters' Chronicle,
Bangalore.

Labour Commission.

Dear Sir,—I have read the Report of the Labour Committee which, while most interesting, is not very definite on one important point.

From the general tenor of the Report one gathers that the expenses of the Commission are to be divided between the various District Associations in proportion to their subscribing acreage, the inference being that the Commission is to be worked at a loss in the sense that the establishment and other expenses will not be met by an income derived from charges to be levied on estates for labour supplied but will in the first instance be met from the Rs. 2 cess and subsequently divided *pro rata* amongst the District Associations.

If this view of the financial aspect of the Labour Commission is correct then I venture to say it is susceptible of improvement.

In any undertaking in which there is no immediate check on expenditure in the form of a monetary income there is a decided tendency for the expenditure to increase in undue proportion to the benefits obtained and with all due respect to the Labour Commissioner, whoever he may be, I am sure he will not be able to say, at any rate for some considerable time, how far the results he obtains justify the expenditure.

A very simple remedy to my mind is to form the Labour Commission into a Limited Liability Company with a capital of say 3 lakhs of Rupees in Ten Rupee shares. Of this capital Rs. 5 per share could be called up now which is roughly equivalent to the Rs. 2 cess or better still half the share capital 1½ lakhs could be issued in the names of the various District Associations in their due proportions and the remainder offered for public subscription. This would give managers and superintendents who believe in the scheme an opportunity of backing it with more than words and also remove the at present reasonable argument of Estate Proprietors that managers and superintendents can afford these experiments as they risk other people's money and not their own.

The Board of Directors would of course consist of the President and Secretary of the U. P. A. S. I. with the Presidents of the District Associations and the Labour Commissioner as Managing Director.

There are many methods of levying charges but a simple one would be a system on the following basis :

1. The Company to charge a sliding scale percentage on the advance granted to a Maistry or Kangany for supervising his recruitments. This amount which on *each individual advance* would be trifling the Estate Manager could debit to the maistry.

2. The Company to charge another sliding scale percentage on monthly cooly earnings of each maistry which amount would be debited to the Estate.

The sliding scales would decrease as the amount of advance increased in the 1st case and the longer the cooly stayed on the Estate in the 2nd. I have very roughly sketched the idea and the charges would have to be very carefully framed but I am sure they would be insignificant compared with the annual loss on bad advances and further the profits, for there should undoubtedly be profits, distributed amongst the shareholders would mean so much off the commissions paid to the Company.

Yours faithfully,

N. O. S. BARNARD.

The EDITOR,
Planters' Chronicle,
Bangalore.

Labour Commission.

Sir,—At our Association Meeting held recently to discuss the Labour Commission Scheme, the question was asked if there was a likelihood of the various Planting Districts having certain labour recruiting areas allotted to them, we were informed that it was not possible, that it was a selfish idea and I understood that if the question was even asked at the forthcoming Extraordinary General Meeting of the U. P. A. it would cause tremendous friction at the start. I fail to see this, from my slight knowledge and what Mr. Mead writes in his letter to the *Chronicle* of 27th instant it appears that most districts have more or less their own recruiting centres, if such is the case, it appears to me that it would help the Labour Commission immensely and prevent friction if as far as possible the allotment of recruiting areas was agreed upon.

C. J. H.

A Criticism.

A criticism on the U. P. A. S. I's Labour Committee's Report as regard "Benefits to be derived from the establishment of a Labour Commission."

(1) Is it likely that this Labour Commission will be able to persuade any foreign Labour Commission to do anything which would curtail their supply of labour? The Labour Committee point out "that whereas in practice we can advance a cooly for not more than one year's service Foreign Countries can advance for three, and consequently have the great advantage over us of being able to make much larger advances," but they do not say how they propose to get over this difficulty. There are at least 3 ways of putting us on the same footing as foreign countries in this matter, viz:—

- (a) by limiting the amount of advance to the same for all.
- (b) by allowing us to advance for 3 years service.
- (c) by not allowing anyone to advance for more than one year.

If Government can be induced to legalise either (a) or (c) it is probable we should get all the labour we require without such an expensive Labour Commission. It is the big lump sum down which tempts the cooly to emigrate and that is what we do not care to risk advancing because of the facilities our labour has of evading repayment. It is the big advance we shy at and not the high pay. At any rate why not get Government to consider the matter before plunging into the cost of an expensive Labour Commission.

(2) How will the Labour Commission ensure this more than the law does at present, unless they can identify coolies or alter the law?

(3) Does the Labour Commission propose to prosecute defaulters?

(4) Does the Labour Commission propose then to supply new labour for short periods?

(7) This can be done without a Labour Commission as hitherto.

(8) From this it is to be assumed that the Labour Commission propose to keep some sort of registration, but would they be able to identify a maistry taking advance in Coimbatore when he had already taken one in Trichinopoly or do they propose to have only a central dépôt and if so who is to pay the railage, etc., of maistries going to be registered? Also what is to prevent a maistry from taking an advance from the Labour Commission and then going to a foreign country as do now? Could even a central dépôt identify men?

(9) Would advertising be of any use when coolies know that foreign Labour Commissions will advance far more.

(10) A temporary advantage gained until foreign Labour Commission Agents learn of the new recruiting areas.

(13) Inter-district competition can be stopped by agreement and published in the *Planters' Chronicle*.

(14) Vide para. 8 above.

Summary:—The whole matter seems to turn on whether the U.P.A.S.I. (not a Labour Commission) can get us put on even terms, as regards advances, with our competitors, if so a labour Commission may be able to give us the benefits they claim will accrue, excluding the identification of maistries or labour. It is noticeable that the Labour Commission say nothing about the prevention of crimping—and perhaps it is just as well—for even presuming that all planters undertake not to employ any labour (except locals) without a chit from the Labour Commission, now would it be possible to prevent the same cooly from being sent out under different (or even the same) maistries several times in the year if there is no identification. So long as our competitors can advance more than we care to risk, the Labour Commission will not do any more (at great cost) than we are now doing for ourselves (for comparatively little) except possibly to give us the benefits claimed in paras. 4, 6, 10, 11, and 12.

N. I. K.

THE MANAGING EDITOR,

Planters' Chronicle,

Bangalore.

Coffee Borer.

Coonoor, 22nd September, 1913.

Dear Sir,—For the past two years I have been scraping the stems of the trees and coating thickly with good whitewash, preferably from shell lime which must be fresh. A woman will scrape 50 trees or whitewash 50 trees. I have found this a safe remedy and am now trying simply whitewashing without scraping.

Yours faithfully,

A. G. NICHOLSON.